

Amendments to the Claims

1-61. (canceled)

62. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
~~positioning an implant in a patient's body at an implantation site such that the implant creates a space between a body tissue and at least one other object; and~~
~~expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the implantation site disposed in the patient's body such that the space between the body tissue and at least one other object is at least maintained.~~

63-68. (canceled)

69. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the implant is at least partially formed of a biodegradable material.

70-75. (canceled)

76. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including the step of forming at least a portion of a spacer of expandable material, said step of positioning an implant in a patient's body includes positioning the spacer in the patient's body, said step of expanding the implant includes expanding expandable material of the spacer.

77-115.(canceled)

116. (new) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the implantation site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

117. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the step of expanding the implant

includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and implant is decreased.

118. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.

119. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.

120. (new) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the tissue is bone.

121. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein the step of expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.

122. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.

123. (new) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.

124. (new) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including expanding the implant after compressing the implant.

125. (new) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
compressing an implant;
positioning the implant in a patient's body at an implantation site; and
expanding the implant at the implantation site after compressing the implant.

126. (new) A method as set forth in claim 125 wherein the implantation site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

127. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and the implant is decreased.

128. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.

129. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.

130. (new) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein the tissue is bone.

131. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.

132. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.

133. (new) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.

134. (new) A method as set forth in claim 125 further including expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the implantation site.